

## **Town Meeting Coordinating Committee**

Meeting of Thursday, January 7, 2010

Bangs Community Center, room 101

**Attendance:** Peggy Roberts, Nonny Burack, Aaron Hayden (departed 5:55), Harry Brooks, Carol Gray, Mary Streeter, Rob Crowner

**1. Call to order:** Peggy calls the meeting to order at 4:46pm.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting:** By consensus, the committee agrees to postpone consideration of the minutes of November 24, 2009 until the next meeting.

Mary points out that according to TMCC bylaws, "proceedings of subcommittees" should be filed with the Town Clerk as a report of the subcommittee.

**3. Ad hoc committee on budget motions:** Nonny reports that the Finance Committee has agreed to ordering by lottery the four parts of the municipal budget other than General Government, crediting the leadership of the committee chair and the finance director. The Finance Committee will conduct a survey following Spring TM to assess reception of this action.

**4. Town committees:** Aaron reports that the Select Board has been working on revamping its relationship with town committees, first revising application procedures and now working to attract volunteers to fill approximately seventy empty seats. Noting that well-functioning committees should lead to a well-functioning Town Meeting, Aaron requests feedback from TMCC, which offers the following suggestions:

- posting vacancies on the town website
- distributing Citizen Activity Forms at TMCC events
- sending periodical email notice to the TMCC listservs
- creating a flyer listing committees and openings
- using public access media outlets
  - putting a flyer or notice on the ACTV scroll
  - using ACTV program "Conversations" or WMUA program "Focus"
  - arranging for ACTV interns to film short spots pitching various committees
- trying to get the newspaper interested
- inviting committee chairs to make short presentations at (televised) Select Board meetings
- asking committees to draft short descriptions of their work

Carol requests that more attention be paid to getting committee agendas and minutes posted to the town website in a timely manner, which in any case is required by open meeting law. Peggy notes that she has been informed that a hard copy of minutes must be filed in the Select Board office. Mary states that she is working with Kris Pacunas to develop and disseminate to committees instructions on using the website to post meeting information. Mary states that it is not clear which committees are actually active, but all that are should have a page on the town website.

**5. Notification of expiring terms:** Nonny, with the assistance of Judy Simpson, will complete the addressing and mailing of notifications to TM members whose terms are expiring.

**6. ACTV disks:** Harry believes that DVDs of recent TMCC events have been delivered to the Library by ACTV, but will follow up to confirm. Harry agrees to ask ACTV to replay previous TMCC informational forums.

Carol requests that all information mailed in TM packets or distributed at TM, especially Planning Board memos, be collected in a binder at the Library, as has been done in the past.

**7. Electronic voting:** Aaron states that he has been investigating the radio "personal response system" in use at Amherst College and is planning to organize a small demonstration for the Town Clerk and Town Moderator, to which members of TMCC will be invited. The initial cost would be approximately equivalent to a four years' supply of the tally cards currently in use. There are a number of questions to be answered before it could be proposed for TM, including which votes it should be used for, how a TM member could be sure that his or her vote was recorded, and how evidence of lack of quorum should be handled. Peggy states that town bylaws would have to be amended to provide for electronic voting. Harry states that people would have to be trained how to use it and then not misplace their handheld device during TM sessions.

Aaron states that while the system may be implemented for one reason, its existence might suggest new uses. Peggy states that TMCC's poll in 2005 showed strong support for using electronic voting to increase TM members' accountability. Carol wonders if there is another way to use tally vote cards without wasting so much paper. Peggy proposes creating an ad hoc subcommittee to consider tally voting, including paper use and electronic options. Aaron agrees to keep TMCC informed of his progress.

Aaron recommends that the chair contact the Town Manager for the purpose of TMCC's participation in Town Meeting planning events.

**8. Winter projects:** Mary requests TMCC members to provide feedback on the content of the TMCC webpages, including missing information and information that should be updated.

**9. Next meeting:** Amid lack of consensus regarding the timing of the next meeting, Rob agrees to post a Doodle.com poll to help narrow down availability. Mary will coordinate with Nonny to get her input included.

**10. Adjournment:** The meeting is adjourned at 6:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Crowner

Approved: February 1, 2010

Documents distributed at the meeting:

1. agenda
2. draft minutes of November 24, 2009
3. copy of email listing Spring TM petition article deadlines
4. copy of email from Alisa Brewer requesting assistance on information dissemination
5. printout of town website pages with TMCC information